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MORBIUS VERSUS

BLADE

THE VAMPIRE-HUNTER?



DIRECT EDITION



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YOU COULD SLIT THE ATMOSPHERE WITH A KNIFE.

THE POLICE ARE EVERYWHERE ALL TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM ONE MAN ...

... PROFESSOR JOHN CARIC, A.K.A. BIBLE JOHN, OCULT GURU, ESCAPED FROM THE NYMAN PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC ...

...FRIEND TO BLADE,
VAMPIRE-HUNTER.

JOHN NOW LIES AT DEATH'S DOOR
AFTER AN ENCOUNTER WITH DEACON
FROST, THE NOGGERATH WHO SET

[illegible]

AT THE MOMENT A VAMPIRE KILLED HIS MOTHER, BLADE WAS BORN! NOW, ARMED WITH UNIQUE POWERS AND EVERY EDGED WEAPON IMAGINABLE, HE STALKS THE NIGHT TO ERADICATE THE UNDEAD AND PROTECT HUMANITY!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:
BLADE THE VAMPIRE HUNTER

RITES & PASSAGES



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STEVE MONCUSE - INKER
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TOM ZILKO - COLORIST
CHRIS COOPER - EDITOR
BOBBIE CHASE - EDITOR IN CHIEF



MORBIS ISN'T A TRUE VAMPIRE. HIS CONDITION ISN'T MYSTICAL -- IT'S DUE TO A SCIENTIFIC ACCIDENT...

...BUT THE EFFECTS MAKE HIM JUST ANOTHER BLOODSUCKER, WITH ALL THAT'S DONE DOWN WITH HIM, LATELY...

CAN I TRUST HIM?

STILL FULL OF THE SOCIAL GRACES I OSE, BLADE. ARE YOU HERE ON BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?

THOUGH IT PAINS ME TO SAY SO, I NEED YOUR HELP -- AN YOU'RE GONNA GIVE IT?



OH, THAT'S RIGHT. I'M TEMPTED TO LET YOU DO YOUR WORST AND BE CONDEMNED TO WHATEVER FATE AWAITS YOU.



WE'VE NEVER BEEN FRIENDS AND ONLY ALLIES BY DEFAULT.

AS THE DEMONSGOKE, YOU EVEN KILLED ME ONCE! -- SOMETHING I'LL NOT FORGIVE IN A HURRY.

DON'T DO THE BLOOD THING ANYMORE -- I GOT BETTER. MY LIFE'S CHANGED. SO WHAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO COME MAKING DEMANDS OF ME!!

IN THE MIDNIGHT MAGAZINE -- THIS



YOU'RE RIGHT. I WAS TACTLESS. THINGS HAVE ALTERED FOR ME ALSO. BUT I DO SERIOUSLY NEED YOUR HELP.

WELL, YOU'RE
IN THE RIGHT
PLACE.

I'M
NOT HERE
FOR HIM -- I'M
LOOKING OUT FOR
A FRIEND. HIS
NAME'S JOHN
CARR.

HAH!
LIFE'S NEVER
SIMPLE WITH YOU, IS
IT? HE'S A CATEGORY 'A'
PSYCHIATRIC PATIENT.
HE'S LOCKED DOWN
TIGHTER THAN
FORT KNOS.

ONCE
HE'S WELL
ENOUGH, THEY'RE
SHIPPING HIM BACK
TO THE ARMYAN
CLINIC UPSTATE.

THEN
IT'S IMPERATIVE
I SEE HIM. HE'S
STEERED ME
THROUGH SOME
ROUGH TIMES --
I OWE HIM.

I ALSO
NEED TO
KNOW WHY A
VAMPIRE NAMED
DEACON FROST
HALF-KILLED HIM.

THAT
BLOOD-
SUCKER'S
HOOKED INTO
SOMETHING BIG.
HE THINKS HE'S
EVOLVING.
BECOMING A
VAMPIRE
BOD!

I'VE GOT
TO FIND OUT
WHAT'S GOING ON,
AND JOHN'S THE
ONLY CLUE
I'VE GOT.

PERHAPS
THERE IS A
WAY I CAN GET
YOU FAST
SECURITY
FOR A FEW
MINUTES...

IT'S
ALL I NEED.
IF HE'S DYING, HE
SHOULD BE ABLE TO
SEE SOMEONE WHO
CARES ABOUT HIM.
ONE LAST
TIME.

YOU
REALLY
HAVE CHANGED,
HAVEN'T
YOU?

WHO
KNOWS -- IF
WE'RE NOT SEEING
EACH OTHER AS
HUNTER AND
HUNTED ANYMORE,
WE MIGHT FIND SOME
COMMON GROUND
BETWEEN US.



THERE IS NO SOUND EXCEPT THE LOW WHISPER OF MACHINES KEEPING BODY AND SOUL TOGETHER.

IT'S BEEN SAID THAT THOSE CLOSE TO DEATH MAY CATCH GLIMPSES OF WORLDS BEYOND LIFE.

THOUGH BILLY JOHNS' PSYCHIC ABILITY ALLOWS HIM A CLARITY OF VISION UNAVAILABLE TO MOST.



HE DOES NOT COUNT HIMSELF FORTUNATE.



ONCE AGAIN I'M PLAGUED BY THIS HELLISH VISION OF A FUTURE NEW YORK WITH A BURNING SKY LAID WASTE BY THE VILE APPETITES AND AMBITION OF COUNT DRACULA.

BUT WHY? I THOUGHT I HAD BEEN SHOWN ALL THERE WAS!





IT'S NOT THAT EASY. FROST IS CONSORTING WITH DEMONS. HE'S ALREADY SACRIFICED ONE HUMAN SOUL AND PLANS TO DO SO AGAIN.

PLEASE. HE'S USING A CHILD... A YOUNG BOY! HIS PURE, UNTAINTED SOUL IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY AMONGST DEMONS.

I'M SORRY, BUT WE HAVE TO LEAVE. IF WE STAY HERE ANY LONGER, WE'LL AROUSE TOO MUCH SUSPICION.

CAN'T LEAVE HIM HERE - NOT LIKE THIS!

SO PLEASE... FOR ME. IF YOU'RE CAUGHT NOW, ALL WILL BE LOST. MY LIFE IS NOTHING AGAINST THE MILLIONS WHO FORGET THEIR IF FROST SUCCEEDS.

YOU STAY PUT. I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU!

YEAH, I KNOW.

A SLAUGHTERHOUSE,
SOMEWHERE IN NEW YORK...

...A NECESSARY EVIL,
WHERE ONE FORM OF
LIFE IS BUTCHERED
TO FEED ANOTHER...

...AN IRONY NOT LOST
ON THE HOSPITALITY
DEACON FROST!

THIS IS
THE END OF
THE LINE FOR
YOU, MY BOY. OUR
LITTLE GROWN
COUNTRY JAHNT
TERMINATES
HERE,
TONIGHT.

PLEASE,
MASTER, I'M
SCARED.

SOOOOOD!

BUT
THIS IS ALL
MERELY GET
DRESSING - AN
APPETIZER FOR
THE MAIN
COURSE.

AN
ABATTOIR -
WHAT A FITTING
STAGE FOR
TONIGHT'S PRO-
CEEDINGS.

THE
PRESENCE
OF SO MUCH
DEAD FLESH
WILL DRAW THE
GOTHIC ENTITY
LIKE A MOTH TO
A FLAME.

MASTER,
I WANT TO
GO HOME
NOW, LIKE YOU
PROMISED. YOU
SAID TO SEE
MY DAD.

SO YOU SHALL,
CHILD. FOR BY
TODAY'S END YOU'LL
BE ROASTING WITH
HIM IN WHATEVER
CORNER OF THE
FIT HE CALLS
HOME.

ELSEWHERE...

IT DOESN'T
SEEM SO LONG
AND THAT JOHN
SAVE ME THIS
WITCH COMPASS.

BACK
THEN I
FOURED HIM
FOR ANOTHER
LOSER INTO
THE OCCULT
MAN, BAD FIRST
IMPRESSION
OR WHAT?

SINCE THEN WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH
SO MUCH STUFF
HE'S SHOWN ME
OPTIONS I'D
NEVER
CONSIDERED

NOW
HE'S BEING
KEPT ALIVE BY
MAGICS.
I CAN FEEL THE
RAGE BOILING
INSIDE ME, BUT
IT SERVES NO
PURPOSE.

I'VE
GOT TO BE
LIKE THIS
CATHARTIC
SWORD

SURE,
STEADY,
PERFECTLY
BALANCED.

A
WARRIOR'S
STRENGTH IS
IN HIS INNER
CALM AND
CONCENTRA-

HEY
BLADE -- IS
THAT A SWORD
IN YOUR HAND
OR ARE YOU
JUST PLEASED
TO SEE
ME?

BAD
JOKE, BAD
TWINING. I'M
ABOUT TO
GO OUT AND
GUT PROTH'S
HEART OUT.

SOUNDS
FUN! CAN I
WATCH?

NOW

JOHN
SAID YOU'D
SAY THAT. SO
I'M COMING
ANYWAY.



THE AIR IS HEAVY WITH THE CLOVING ODOUR OF DEAD MEAT AND INCENSE

HEAR ME
HELICAL DARK
AGENT OF DETHRON
THE CONTRACT IS
HONORED. THE
RITE BEGINS. ALL
HE MADE READY
FOR YOUR
ARRIVAL.

BEYOND THE CANDLELIGHT
THE DARKNESS WRITHES
AS THINGS NOT OF THIS
WORLD PRESS EAGERLY
FOR ADMITTANCE.

SEE
THE OFFERING
I HAVE FOR YOU!
TENDER FLESH TO
TRADE; A SWEET
SOUL TO
BARTER!

COME
TO ME NOW
SO I MAY
WALK
THE PATH OF
GLORY!

YES!
TAKE HIM,
GIVE WHAT IS
RIGHTFULLY
MINE...

SSSHHH

NO!!





EVER
THE
OPTIMIST
IN BLACK!

KRAKK



FOR
YEARS, OUR
LIVES HAVE
BEEN
INTERMINED,
LOOKED IN A
DEADLY CYCLE OF
RETRIBUTION,
BUT NO
MORE...

...FOR
TODAY, I
TRANSFORM
THIS MORTAL
COIL TO BECOME
THE FIRST
VAMPIRIC DEITY.
A GOD
AMONG THE
UNDEAD!

HOWEVER,
SEEMS AS IF
YOU'LL
REINTEGRATE YOU ...
JUST FOR OLD
TIMES
SAKE.



YOU'RE
ALL HEART.
I BET YOU'RE
KIND TO
ORPHANS
TOO.

WHA...!!

I'VE
DISAPPEARED!
HAVE YOU
FORGOTTEN
ME
ALREADY!



NOT
AT
ALL...



THAT WAS AN AMUSING DIVERSION WHILE IT LASTED - QUITE LIKE OLD TIMES... BUT TIMES PAST NEVER THE LESS.

I SEE MY RITE OF SUMMONING HAS BEEN ACCEPTED. THE CIRCLE OF GOLD LIGHT BURNS READY FOR MY ILLUSTrious GUEST.

I SHALL READY THE BOY. HIS SACRIFICE IS ESSENTIAL TRIBUTE IN PAYMENT FOR REZAIKAL'S VISIT.

SORRY TO RAIN ON YOUR PARADE, SUCKER. BUT I'VE BEEN BITTEN BY WORSE THAN A FEW BUGS IN MY LIFETIME.

CHOKK



I WILL NOT BE THWARTED. NOT ON THE CLIP OF SUCH AN AUSPICIOUS OCCASION!



DON'T BE SO SURE!



TIME
TO DIE,
DAD!

HEE-
HEE...
HEE-
HEE!



POOR
BLADE! HAVE
YOU FORGOTTEN SO
SOON? I WARNED YOU
DURING OUR LAST
ENCOUNTER THAT I AM
NO LONGER A WERE
VAMPIRE.

I AM
BEYOND BEING
WOUNDED BY A SWORD
THROUGH THE HEART...
AS YOU AND THE
REST OF HUMANITY
WILL SOON LEARN
TO YOUR
COST!



OH MY
GOD!!

NO...
MY GOD -
HE HAS COME
TO GRANT ME
MY DREAMS AT
LAST!!

AND SUDDENLY, FROST REMEMBERS WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE RITE OF SUMMONING...

...HOW WHATEVER IS TO BE SACRIFICED MUST LIE WITHIN THE CIRCLE OF COLD FLAME.

NO! WAIT! THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE!!

LORD NEZARAL, I ...I CAN'T MOVE!

CURSE YOU, BLADE, YOUR SWORD'S DRIVEN DEEP INTO THE STONE FLOOR!







WH... DOES
THIS KIND OF
THING HAPPEN
TO YOU
OFTENT?

ALL
THE TIME.
HOW'S THE
BOY?

HE'S
IN SOME
KIND OF SEMI-
HYPNOTIC TRANCE.
I'LL TAKE HIM BACK
TO ST. JUDE'S
WITH ME.



MORRIS...
I'M SORRY FOR
MISJUDGING YOU
EARLIER. I WAS
WRONG ABOUT
YOU... ABOUT
EVERYTHING.



WE BOTH HAVE
BLOOD-STAINED
PASTS... FOR 5000
OR 11. WE DID
WHAT WE HAD TO
DO AT THE TIME.
BUT WE'VE
BOTH
CHANGED
NOW.

FOR
THE
BETTER,
I HOPE.



AFTER
HANNUBAL
DIED, I NEVER
THOUGHT I'D
CALL ANOTHER
VAMPIRE FRIEND
THANKS FOR
PROVING ME
WRONG.

ANY
TIME.

St. Jude's Hospital

JOHN CARIK IS
AFRAID TO
SLEEP...

...AFRAID OF WHAT
VISIONS AWAIT HIM
BEYOND THE WAKING
WORLD...

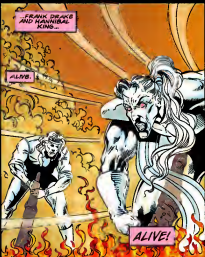


HE FIGHTS THE DRUGS
DESIGNED TO EASE HIS
PAIN. HE NEEDS THE PAIN
TO KEEP HIM AWAKE.

STILL, ONE
INEVITABLE
WORD BRUISES
IN HIS MIND...

FRANK DEAKE
AND HANNIBAL
KING...

ALIVE.



ALIVE!



ALIVE!!

LETTER HACKS

CHRIS COOPER - Editor BOBBIE CHASE - Group Editor

c/o Marvel Entertainment Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

All correspondence must include your name and address, although we will gladly withhold that information upon request.

Dear BLADE Team,

Blade is one of the most dynamic characters in the Midnight Sons line! He never fails to let anyone know where he stands, and I like that kind of attitude.

Your first four issues are supreme! I really like Bible John—he's an interesting character. I just have a couple of questions:

- 1) Why did you take off the Midnight Sons emblem from the cover?
- 2) Will Blade go after Morbius, the living vampire?
- 3) Will he team up with other Midnight Sons characters?

Charles Schofield
P.O. Box 1493
Canton, ME 04736

To answer your questions in order, Charles:

- 1) We removed the Midnight Sons dagger to establish closer ties between the Midnight Sons titles and the rest of the Marvel Universe.
- 2) As you can see from this issue, there's a little detente between Blade and Morbius right now.
- 3) Always a possibility!

Dear Bladesters,

I really enjoyed issue #4, because we got some villains that are not Dracula!

Night Terror and Steppin' Razor seem to be interesting, but I'm sure if Blade will get to know them much better next issue—along with his katanas! And I'm glad Bible John is not just a background character—he's got great potential!

Changing subjects a bit, what is going on with Julia? First the mysterious phone call last issue, and now someone is following her this issue (who you literally would not want to meet in a dark alley)! Could this be someone actually trying to get a hold of Blade? A somehow returned Frank Drake or Hannibal King, perhaps?

I'll be interested to see how long before Dracula shows up again in issue #50 asking too much?

I just don't like the fact that he's back. It means that everybody who's died trying to see him destroyed—including Rachel Van Helsing and Quincy Harker—died for nothing.

The point to all of this seems to be that the villains always find a way back to life, while the heroes always find a way to an early grave.

Mike McCullough
5708 Kennedy Street
Riverdale, MD 20737

It certainly may seem that the villains have the upper hand over the heroes, Mike, but thankfully, there always seems to be new heroes to take up the cause where their fallen predecessors left off. Blade is now carrying on the crusade begun by Quincy and Rachel, who themselves carried on the war

against vampires once waged by Quincy's father, Jonathan Harker, and Rachel's grandfather, Abraham Van Helsing. As for the heroes always going to an early grave... we can think of several instances of the heroes coming

"What is going on with Julia? First the mysterious phone call, and now someone is following her..."

back to life, most notably Jean Grey, Adam Warlock, and a guy with a big red "S" on his chest.

Dear Guys,

I've got only a few things to say, so I'm going to say them and be done with it. Are you ready? I hope so.

1) The series **BLADE: THE VAMPIRE-HUNTER** is not turning out the way I expected. It's better! I mean, you gave us Blade, who can't get away from the supernatural, and especially the vampire arena, and changed him from the gung-ho, over-the-top, obsessed fighter he was into a new and more conservative fighter. And as far as I'm concerned, a loser one. Although I did wonder why he would jump into a factory full of trolls and one very nasty vampire all by himself. He still pulled it off, and in spectacular form.

2) I really like Bible John. He's a little odd, but he makes for an interesting character. And he seems sincere in his efforts to help Blade. I would, however, like to read more about his past. The thing that shattered his mind and killed everyone who accompanied him on the expedition—is it still around? Maybe Blade could have a run-in with it, giving John the chance to even the score.

3) The artwork is superb. I can't say enough about it, except that I hope it's not going anywhere. All of you are doing an excellent job. It looks great, and all of you deserve a lot of praise for it.

I've enjoyed the storylines so far with a great amount of enthusiasm, and I am always eager to see the next issue. I can't wait to see what the future has in store for Blade and John.

Before I go, I just want to say that this book is surpassing the NIGHTSTALKERS legacy, which I had doubted could be done. You guys have done good here, and it looks like I'm going to be around for the long haul.

Michael Aaron Payne
3336 Harris Lane
Haltom City, TX 76117

And we're glad to have you with us, Michael! Your comments and enthusiasm for this series are very encouraging, and we hope to continue providing you with reading enjoyment for years to come! As for what the future has in store for Blade, all we can say is: it won't necessarily be too easy!

Chris,

I bought this book believing initially that it was going to be a four-part limited series. I read "Siege of Darkness" and enjoyed it, but I'm not a big fan of the occult or Blade. However, I like this book.

Why?

Well...good pacing of storylines and character development. Every book, especially new ones, must have supporting players to forward the main character and his/her story. It just depends if they are real or simply used to manipulate the book in one direction or another. Julie and Bible John are real.

On top of that, Blade has a

quality (that I've only recently discovered) which is precious for heroic figures: he's someone you can believe in. Vampires seem to be extremely popular and promise mega-sales for comics in which they appear. But I don't read BLADE for them. So if you can keep the vampires on the periphery, I'll keep buying. You know...about 20 to 30 per issue!

Brian Palacios
5416 Dunbar Drive
Grand Blanc, MI 48409

All those things you love about BLADE, Brian, are the result of strong writing, and for that we owe a debt of thanks to Ian Edginton, who shepherded this book through its first 8 issues. We're sorry to say that Ian has moved on to other projects...but we're overjoyed to welcome WEB OF SPIDER-MAN's Terry Kavanagh as BLADE's new regular writer, starting next issue! We think you're going to be thrilled and fascinated by the concepts and twists that Terry has in store for Blade!

NEXT ISSUE: Blade captures a vampire instead of destroying it—with terrifying implications for the life and soul of the dying Bible John!



IN TWO WEEKS: Nightmare, in our world, battles the usurper of his world—and his beloved love hangs in the balance! Don't miss the conclusion of NIGHTMARE, the unprecedented limited series from Ann Nocenti, Joe Bennett, and Mike Witherby!

